



ISP: Tippecanoe County Picked as Pilot For Gang Intelligence Sharing

State Sen. Hershman is driving force in securing high-tech funding; Prosecutor Harrington, Sheriff Brown to develop model systems for other departments

Tippecanoe County will soon be home to a pilot project aimed at helping law enforcement identify and police criminal gang activity across Indiana, state officials announced today.

"Violence and other criminal activity associated with gangs and would-be gangs are troubling problems for law enforcement agencies at all levels - local, state and federal - and the citizens we serve," according to Indiana State Police Supt. Paul Whitesell. "Public safety agencies are constantly collecting intelligence related to gang members and their activities. Our challenge sometimes is in connecting the dots and sharing information among jurisdictions in order to affect arrests, aid prosecutions and prevent further victimization."

With the help of State Sen. Brandt Hershman (R-Buck Creek) and support of Tippecanoe County Sheriff Tracy Brown, Prosecutor Pat Harrington, and Mayors Tony Roswarski and John Dennis that scenario is likely to change soon, according to Whitesell.

"My thanks to Senator Hershman for understanding the threat gang activity presents to our community safety, and being proactive in addressing a key component to the successful interdiction of their growth," Harrington said. "Gang members are highly mobile, moving from one community to another to further their criminal conduct. This project highlights an area that confronts law enforcement which is the identification, deterrence and effective prosecution of gang members. We can develop a platform for this information to be 'mobile' from one police agency to another regardless of whether the gang member is in Tippecanoe County or any other Indiana county."

Harrington said the project is a result of the Tippecanoe County Project Safe Neighborhood Anti-Gang Response Initiative that works to deter and prosecute gang offenders.

"I look forward to partnering with Sheriff Brown in the successful development and implementation of the project," Harrington said.

As chair of the Indiana Senate Committee on Tax and Fiscal Policy and member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Hershman took an interest in further developing the state's INGangNetwork, a data gathering and sharing effort managed by Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center (IIFC) - a post-9/11 security command located in Indianapolis.

"Our IGN receives and collates gang-related information from many sources and then uploads the information into a searchable database accessible to all police and sheriff's departments statewide," Whitesell said. "To achieve the fullest and most effective use of such a system requires acquisition of additional and sometimes costly computer hardware, software and web-driven capabilities. Senator Hershman worked with the Indiana State Police and local officials to secure a \$300,000 appropriation to be funded over two years. This effort will help take our gang information-sharing project to the next level."

Brown and Harrington will collaborate with the ISP to develop a pilot program to expand the efficiency and effectiveness of gang intelligence data collection to benefit local law enforcement agencies across the state.

"The ultimate goal of the Tippecanoe County pilot program is to develop systems and procedures that once identified and implemented, tested and perfected, can be replicated by other law enforcement agencies within Indiana and across the United States," said Whitesell. "Tippecanoe County officials are forward thinking and joining ranks to make not only their own community safer, but others as well."